**ZION’S MESSENGER**

**March 2023 + Zion Lutheran Church + 269-367-4817**

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I was stuck very deeply with some of the words in the hymn that we sang on Transfiguration Sunday. The gathering hymn was “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright.” In verse 2, we sang these words, “Now though daily earth’s deep sadness may perplex us, and distress us, yet with heav’nly joy you bless us.” So many things are happening in our world that do distress us. I wore a special stole that day with MSU logos on the fabric because that day was Spartan Sunday to support the Michigan State community that was devastated by the tragic shooting on the campus the past week. This event hit very close to home, even as there have been at least 70 mass shootings in our country in just the 6 weeks of 2023. This kind of deep sadness can perplex us and distress us. We also continue to pray for Ukraine as that cruel war continues to rage on and devastate the lives of so many people whose homes, towns and country are being destroyed. And so many people have lost their lives. We are praying for the people of Turkey and Syria who are suffering the effects of a very damaging earth quake where so many lives were lost and again, homes destroyed. Those are just some of many things that are happening all over our world and in our country where lives are being lost and torn apart. There certainly seems to be a lot to lament about these days. As we pray and as we offer support in these tragedies, we bring and receive the comfort of our Lord. The verse ends with these words, “yet with heav’nly joy you bless us.” Where is the joy in the midst of tragedy? Our joy comes from our Lord. Our theme verse again for this year is “The joy of the Lord is our strength.” Nehemiah 8:10. In some circumstances we cannot find joy on our own. When we are perplexed with sadness and distressed, its easy to lose hope and lose faith. We certainly do need to lament. At the end of every lament in the Old Testament, there is a remembrance of what God has done or will do and laments end in praise.

Our faith lies in the goodness of God, especially the goodness that gets us through tragic and difficult times. Through our faith and the experience of heavenly joy, we can help others know that joy as well. Even as we offer comfort and listen to each other’s laments, we also have the joy of the Lord to offer as well.

This season of Lent that we are now beginning is a time to realize the joy of the Lord as we reflect on Jesus’ journey to the cross to save us. There is a tone of somberness in this season as we focus on the suffering and death that Jesus experienced for us. It is a season of quiet reflection and of penitence as we open our hearts to all of the things that need confession and the promise of forgiveness. Yet, we can also experience joy in this season when we realize how much God loved us to give his son for us. God is there in those times of earth’s deep sadness that perplex and distress us. God is there in love. May you experience that love and joy in this Lenten season.

Pastor Becky +

**LENTEN SERVICES**

Our midweek Lenten service begin on March 1. Each week, we join together for a soup supper at 6:00 pm followed by a worship service at 7:00 pm. The theme of our Lenten services is “By Faith”. Each week, we will explore the faith of some Biblical people as we seek to grow in our own faith.

March 1: The Faith of Noah

How do we have faith in things not seen?

March 8: The Faith of Abraham and Sarah

When faith means taking a risk, how do we respond?

March 15: The Faith of Moses

How does our faith choices we must make

March 22: The Faith of the Israelites

Amid joy and difficulties how do we persevere in our faith?

March 29: Jesus, the Perfector of our Faith

How does the way of the cross define our faith?

**BALLOT UPDATE**

Ballots for the proposal to lock doors during worship service and to use a bell/buzzer/ camera system to determine who should be allowed in were due back on February 12th. The ballots were counted prior to the Council meeting on February 14th. There were 22 yes votes and 21 no votes. Council discussed next steps at its meeting and will be working with the Safety Committee to determine a plan of action to implement a new safety plan for worship services. If you have questions or feedback, please feel free to speak with any member of Council or the Safety Committee. Thank you for everyone who voted on this important issue.

**THANK YOU!**

Caroline Brecheisen and Alice Morrow want to thank everyone who came to our birthday celebration and for all the beautiful cards and best wishes. Thanks to everyone who made this day so special. We truly enjoyed everything!

**WELCOME BISHOP SATTERLEE!**

On March 12th, Bishop Satterlee will worship with us, preach, and hold a meeting in the sanctuary following service to explain the call process and answer questions. If you are not able to be at this service but have some questions you would like to ask, you may send your questions to a council member ahead of the service. We will have a potluck lunch following the meeting with tableware and drinks provided.

**EASTER EGG HUNT**

Zion will host an Easter Egg Hunt following service on Easter morning, Sunday, April 9. We're asking the congregation to donate candy and coins for the eggs by March 26. Non-chocolate candy or gum are also requested. Please provide small items that can fit into the eggs. Please bring your kids, grandkids or any other kiddos to our Easter Egg Hunt!

**VBS SAVE THE DATE**

A one -day VBS is tentatively being planned for Wednesday, June 28th. “Pets Unleashed” is the theme, saying that Jesus will always care “fur” us! Please mark your calendar and bring your kids, grandkids, and their friends! We need lots of volunteers to make this day happen. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex if you are able to help. If you have questions, please see Karen or Martha

**DIRECTORY UPDATE**

Chris Farlee’s correct cell number is 517-231-4533, and Kevin Brodbeck’s correct address is 12313 N Clinton Trail, Sunfield, MI 48890

**SUNDAYS IN MARCH**

**March 5- In Sanctuary Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Acolyte: Kole Hokanson

Elder: Buffy Meyers

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Safety Person: Ken Heise

Offering Counters: Mary Makley & Martha Yoder

**March 12- In Sanctuary Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Preacher: Bishop Satterlee

Acolyte: Lexi Griffin

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Mike Johnson

Safety Person: Dan Zylstra

Offering Counters: Diane Griffin & Carlotta Willard

**March 19- In Sanctuary Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Acolyte: Anna Zylstra

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Martha Yoder

Safety Person: Jerry Engle

Offering Counters: Jerry Engle & Carlotta Willard

**March 26 In Sanctuary, No Communion**

Jolene Griffin

Acolyte: Levi Griffin

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Martha Yoder

Safety Person: Diane Griffin

Offering Counters: Doug Mackenzie & Mike Johnson